

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1 to 16, 19 to 24, 29, 32 to 37, 39 to 41, 47, 57 to 75, 78 to 83, 88, 91 to 96, 98 to 100, 106, 116 to 134, 137 to 142, 147, 150 to 155, 157 to 159, and 165 to 177 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter.

Please add new claims 178 to 183 and amend the claims as shown below.

The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. to 16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) A ~~network status~~ server determination apparatus, comprising:

receiving means for receiving an inquiry from a first one of a plurality of information distribution servers;

~~logical distance obtaining means for obtaining respective logical distances between respective sites provided with dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and an accessed client;~~

collection means for collecting network state information ~~with said~~ between a client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, and state information ~~in said respective sites; and~~

server determination means for determining, based on the network state information, which one of the plurality of the optimum information distribution server from said dispersed/arranged information distribution servers the client, which has accessed the first information distribution server, should access; and

informing means for informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access based on the logical distance obtained by said logical distance obtaining means, the network state information between said respective sites and said client, and the state information in said site collected by said collection means.

18. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim 17, further comprising wherein said logical distance obtaining means for obtaining obtains said logical distances between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, wherein said determination means determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers based on the network state information and the logical distances from a route server comprising means for obtaining the logical distance to a predetermined network address from path information between the sites.

19. to 24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim 17, wherein ~~when the network state information between said respective sites and said client is collected,~~ said collection means collects at least one of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said client and ~~said respective sites~~ each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

26. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said server determination means determines the one of the plurality of

~~state information in the site comprises at least one of said network state information in the site and said state information of the information distribution servers based on the network state information and state information of each of the plurality of information distribution servers.~~

27. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim 17, ~~[[26]]~~ wherein when the network state information is collected, said collection means collects at least one of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors ~~in said respective sites.~~

28. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim 26, wherein ~~when said state information of the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers is collected;~~ said collection means collects at least one of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, a number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of ~~said each of the plurality of~~ information distribution server servers.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Original) A ~~network status server~~ determination apparatus,
comprising:
receiving means for receiving an inquiry from a first information
distribution server;

~~logical distance obtaining means for obtaining respective logical distances between respective sites provided with dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and an accessed client;~~

~~collection means for collecting network state information between said respective sites and said client, and state information in said site of each of a plurality of information distribution servers;~~

~~site determination means for, when it is judged that the access from said client is a first access, determining the optimum site from the respective sites based on the logical distance obtained by said logical distance obtaining means;~~

~~first server determination means for determining, based on the state information, one of the optimum plurality of information distribution servers which a client accessing the first information distribution server should access from the information distribution servers in the optimum site determined by said site determination means based on a predetermined condition; and~~

~~second server determination means for, when it is judged that the access from the client is not the first access, determining the optimum information distribution server from said dispersed/arranged information distribution servers based on the logical distance obtained from said logical distance obtaining means, the network state information between said respective sites and said client, and the state information in said site collected by said collection means~~

~~informing means for informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access.~~

31. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim 30 further comprising wherein said logical distance obtaining means for obtaining obtains said logical distances between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, wherein said server determination means determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers based on the state information and from a route server comprising means for obtaining the logical distances to a predetermined network address from path information between the sites.

32. to 37. (Canceled)

38. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said ~~site~~ server determination means determines, based on logical distances between the client and a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of information distribution servers, one of the plurality of sites, and determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers the site in which the respective logical distances between said respective sites and said client are minimum as said optimum site.

39. to 41. (Canceled)

42. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said ~~first~~ server determination means determines the optimum one of a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of information distribution servers, and determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers in the determined one of the plurality of sites based on the state information in said optimum site.

43. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim 30, wherein ~~when the network state information between said respective sites and said client is collected~~, said collection means further collects at least one information of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said client and ~~said respective sites~~ each of said plurality of information distribution servers.

44. (Currently Amended) The network status server according to claim 30, wherein said state information ~~in the site~~ further comprises ~~either one of said network state information in the site and the state information of~~ a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of information distribution servers in the site.

45. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim ~~[[44]]~~ 30, wherein ~~when the network state information in said site is collected~~, said collection means further collects at least one information of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors in ~~said site~~ a plurality of sites provided the plurality of information distribution servers.

46. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim ~~[[44]]~~ 30, wherein ~~when said state information of the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers is collected~~, said collection means collects at least one information of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, a number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of ~~said dispersed/arranged~~ each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

47. (Canceled)

48. (Currently Amended) An information distribution system comprising:

a plurality of dispersed/arranged information distribution servers; and

a network status server,

at least a first one of said plurality of information distribution servers

comprising:

inquiry means for inquiring of said network status server ~~about the optimum~~
which one of the plurality of information distribution servers ~~among said~~
~~dispersed/arranged information distribution servers~~ a client should access in response to an
~~accessing to the first information distribution server by the client;~~

response reception means for receiving a response to said inquiry from said
network status server; and

indication means for indicating ~~said optimum~~ an information distribution
server included in said response to said accessing client, and

said network status server comprising:

inquiry reception means for receiving the inquiry from said inquiry means of
the first information distribution server;

~~logical distance obtaining means for obtaining respective distances between~~
~~said respective sites provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers~~
~~and said client;~~

~~site determination means for determining the optimum site from the~~
~~respective sites based on said obtained logical distance;~~

collection means for collecting network state information between the client
and each of the plurality of information distribution servers;

server determination means for determining based on the network state information, the optimum which one of the plurality of information distribution server ~~from the information distribution servers in the optimum site determined by said site determination means based on a predetermined condition~~ the client should access; and

response transmission means for returning the server determined by said server determination means ~~as the optimum server to said dispersed/arranged first~~ information distribution server[[s]] having transmitted the inquiry.

49. (Currently Amended) The information distribution system according to claim 48, further comprising[[:]] a route server, ~~said route server~~ comprising:

means for obtaining a logical distance between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers ~~to a predetermined network address from the path information between the sites~~, and providing said logical distances to said network status server when said logical distance obtaining means obtains said logical distances.

50. (Currently Amended) The information distribution system according to claim 48, wherein each of said plurality of information distribution servers further comprises:

means for collecting network state information between ~~the~~ a site to which the information distribution server belongs and said client; and

network state transmission means for transmitting said collected network state information to the network status server.

51. (Currently Amended) The information distribution system according to claim 48, wherein each of said plurality of information distribution servers ~~further~~ comprises:

means for collecting network state information in ~~the~~ a site to which the information distribution server belongs, and ~~the~~ state information of the information distribution server; and

in-site information transmission means for transmitting said collected network state information in the site, and the state information of the information distribution server to the network status server.

52. (Currently Amended) An information distribution system comprising:

a plurality of ~~dispersed/arranged~~ information distribution servers; and

a network status server,

at least a first one of said information distribution servers comprising:

inquiry means for inquiring of said network status server ~~about the optimum~~
which one of the plurality of information distribution servers ~~among said~~
~~dispersed/arranged information distribution servers~~ a client should access in response to an
accessing to the first information distribution server by the client;

response reception means for receiving a response to said inquiry from said network status server; and

indication means for indicating ~~said optimum~~ an information distribution server included in the response to said accessing client, and

said network status server comprising:

inquiry reception means for receiving the inquiry from said inquiry means of the first information distribution server;

~~logical distance obtaining means for obtaining respective distances between respective sites provided with said dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and said client;~~

collection means for collecting ~~network~~ state information ~~between said respective sites and said client, and state information in said site~~ of each of the plurality of information distribution servers;

server determination means for determining, based on the state information, one of the optimum information distribution servers which the client accessing the first information distribution server should access ~~from said dispersed/arranged information distribution servers based on the logical distance obtained by said logical distance obtaining means, the network state information between said respective sites and said client, and said state information in the site collected by said collection means; and~~

response transmission means for ~~returning~~ informing the server determined by said server determination means as said optimum server to said dispersed/arranged first information distribution server[[s]] having transmitted the inquiry of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access.

53. (Currently Amended) The information distribution system according to claim 52, further comprising[[(:)] a route server, ~~said route server~~ comprising:

means for obtaining [[a]] logical distances between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers ~~to a predetermined network address from~~

~~the path information between the sites~~, and providing said logical distances to said network status server when said logical distance obtaining means obtains said logical distances.

54. (Currently Amended) The information distribution system according to claim 52, wherein each of said plurality of information distribution servers further comprises:

means for collecting network state information between ~~the~~ a site to which the information distribution server belongs and said ~~accessing~~ client; and

network state transmission means for transmitting said collected network state information to the network status server.

55. (Currently Amended) The information distribution system according to claim 52, wherein each of said plurality of information distribution servers further comprises:

means for collecting network state information of ~~the~~ a site to which the information distribution server belongs, and the state information of the information distribution server; and

in-site information transmission means for transmitting said collected network state information in the site, and the state information of the information distribution server to the network status server.

56. (Currently Amended) The ~~An~~ information distribution system according to claim 53, further comprising:

~~dispersed/arranged information distribution servers; and~~

~~a network status server;~~
~~said information distribution server comprising:~~
~~inquiry means for inquiring of said network status server about the optimum~~
~~information distribution server among said dispersed/arranged information distribution~~
~~servers in response to an accessing client;~~
~~response reception means for receiving a response from said network status~~
~~server; and~~
~~indication means for indicating the optimum information distribution server~~
~~to said client;~~
~~said network status server comprising:~~
~~inquiry reception means for receiving the inquiry from said inquiry means;~~
~~logical distance obtaining means for obtaining respective distances between~~
~~respective sites provided with said dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and~~
~~the accessing client;~~
~~collection means for collecting network state information between said~~
~~respective sites and said client, and state information in the respective sites;~~
~~site determination means for, when it is judged that the access from said~~
~~client is a first access, determining the an optimum site from said respective sites which~~
~~include the plurality of information distribution servers based on the logical distances~~
~~obtained by said logical distance obtaining means;~~
~~first second server determination means for determining the an optimum~~
~~information distribution server from the a plurality of information distribution servers in~~
~~said optimum site determined by the site determination means respective sites based on a~~
~~predetermined condition;~~

wherein said second server determination means ~~for~~, when it is judged that the access from said client is not the first access, ~~determining~~ determines the optimum information distribution server from said ~~dispersed/arranged~~ plurality of information distribution servers based on the logical distances obtained from said logical distance obtaining means, ~~the~~ network state information between said respective sites and said client, and ~~the~~ state information in said respective sites collected by said collection means, ~~[[;]]~~ and

said response transmission means ~~for returning~~ informs the server determined by said ~~first~~ server determination means or said second server determination means as said optimum server to said ~~dispersed/arranged~~ first information distribution server~~[[s]]~~ having transmitted the inquiry.

57. to 75. (Canceled)

76. (Currently Amended) A ~~network status server control method for controlling a network status server, the~~ server determining method comprising:

a receiving step of receiving an inquiry from a first one of a plurality of a ~~logical distance obtaining step of obtaining respective logical distances between respective sites provided with dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and an accessed client;~~

a collecting step of collecting network state information between said ~~respective sites and said~~ a client and each of the plurality of information distribution ~~servers, and state information in said site; and~~

a server determining step of determining, based on the optimum information distribution, server from said information distribution servers based on said obtained logical distance, the network state information, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the ~~between said respective sites and said client, which has accessed~~ accesses the first, and the state information distribution server, should access; and
an informing step of informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access ~~in said site collected in said collecting step.~~

77. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim 76, further comprising a wherein said logical distance obtaining step comprises obtaining said logical distance from a route server comprising means for of obtaining the logical distances to a predetermined network address from path information between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, wherein said server determining step determines the one of the plurality of information servers based on the network state information and the logical distances ~~sites.~~

78. to 83. (Canceled)

84. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim 76, wherein ~~when the network state information between said respective sites and said client is collected,~~ said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said accessed client and said respective sites each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

85. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim 76, wherein said server determining step determines the one of the plurality of state information distribution servers based on the ~~in the respective sites comprises at least one of said network state information and in the respective sites and said state information of each of the plurality of the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers.~~

86. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim 76, ~~[[86]]~~ wherein when the network state information ~~in said respective sites~~ is collected, said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors ~~in said respective sites.~~

87. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim 85, wherein ~~when said state information of the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers is collected,~~ said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of ~~said dispersed/arranged~~ each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

88. (Canceled)

89. (Currently Amended) A ~~network status server~~ determination control method comprising:

~~a logical distance obtaining step of obtaining respective logical distances between respective sites provided with dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and an accessed client;~~

a receiving step of receiving an inquiry from a first information distribution server;

~~a collecting collection step of collecting **network** state information of each of a plurality of information distribution servers between said respective sites and said client, and state information in said respective sites;~~

~~a server determination site-determining step of determining, based on the state information, one of the plurality of information distribution servers that a when it is judged that the access from said client which accesses the first information distribution server should access is a first access, determining the optimum site from said respective sites based on said obtained logical distance; and~~

an informing step of informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers

~~a first server determining step of determining the optimum information distribution server from the information distribution servers in said optimum site based on a predetermined condition; and~~

~~a second server determining step of, when it is judged that the access from said client is not the first access, determining the optimum information distribution server from said dispersed/arranged information distribution servers based on said obtained logical distance, said network state information between said respective sites provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and said client, and said state~~

~~information in the site provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers collected in said collecting step.~~

90. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim 89, further comprising a wherein said logical distance obtaining step of comprises obtaining said logical distances between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, wherein said server determination step determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers based on the state information and from a route server comprising means for obtaining the logical distances to a predetermined network address from path information between the sites.

91. to 96. (Canceled)

97. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim 89, ~~wherein said site determining step comprises determining the site in which the respective~~ server determination means determines, based on logical distances between the client and a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of information distribution servers, one of the plurality of sites, and determines the one of the plurality of information servers ~~said respective sites provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and said accessed client are minimum as said optimum site.~~

98. to 100. (Canceled)

101. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim 89, wherein said ~~first server~~ determination means determines one of a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of ~~determining step comprises determining the optimum~~ information distribution servers, and determines the one of the plurality of ~~information distribution servers in the determined one of the plurality of based on the state information in said optimum~~ sites.

102. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim 89, wherein ~~when the network state information between said respective sites provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and said accessed client is collected~~, said collecting step further comprises collecting at least one information of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said ~~accessed client and said respective sites~~ each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

103. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim 89, wherein said state information ~~in the site~~ comprises ~~at least one of said network state information in the site and said state information of a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of~~ information distribution servers in the site.

104. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim ~~[[103]]~~ 89, wherein ~~when the network state information in said site provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers is collected~~, said collecting step comprises collecting at least one information of a congestion degree, a

number of packets, and a number of packet errors in ~~said site~~ a plurality of sites proved with the plurality of information distribution servers.

105. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server control~~ method according to claim [[103]] 89, wherein ~~when said state information of the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers is collected~~, said collecting step comprises collecting at least one information of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, a number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of each of said plurality of information distribution servers.

106. (Canceled)

107. (Currently Amended) An information distribution system control method for controlling an information distribution system comprising[[:]] a plurality of dispersed/arranged information distribution servers,[:]] and a network status server, said method comprising:

in at least a first one of the plurality of said information distribution servers,
an inquiring step of inquiring of said network status server ~~about the optimum~~ which one of the plurality of information distribution servers among said plurality of information distribution servers a client should access in response to an accessing to the first information distribution server by the client;

a response receiving step of receiving a response to said inquiry from said network status server; and

an indicating step of indicating said ~~optimum~~ an information distribution server included in the response to said accessing client, and

in said network status server,

an inquiry receiving step of receiving the inquiry from said inquiring step of said first information distribution server;

~~a logical distance obtaining step of obtaining respective distances between~~
~~said respective sites provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers~~
~~and said client;~~

~~a site determining step of determining the optimum site from said respective~~
~~sites provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers based on said~~
~~obtained logical distance;~~

a collecting step of collecting network state information between the client
and each of the plurality of information distribution servers;

~~a server determining step of determining, based on the network state~~
~~information, the optimum which one of the plurality of~~ information distribution ~~server~~
~~from the information distribution servers in the optimum site determined by said site~~
~~determining step based on a predetermined condition~~ the client should access; and

a response transmitting step of returning the server determined in said server determining step ~~as said optimum server~~ to said first information distribution server having transmitted the inquiry.

108. (Currently Amended) The ~~information distribution system control~~ method according to claim 107, wherein said information distribution system further comprises a route server, and said ~~control~~ method further comprises, in said route server, a

logical distance ~~calculating~~ obtaining step of obtaining ~~[[a]]~~ logical distances between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers to a predetermined network address from the path information between the sites, and providing said logical distances to said network status server

~~said logical distance obtaining step comprises obtaining said logical distance calculated in said logical distance calculating step.~~

109. (Currently Amended) The ~~information distribution system control~~ method according to claim 107, further comprising, ~~[[:]]~~ in said information distribution server,

a step of collecting network state information between ~~the~~ a site to which the information distribution server belongs and said ~~accessing~~ client; and

a network state transmitting step of transmitting said collected network state information to the network status server.

110. (Currently Amended) The ~~information distribution system control~~ method according to claim 107, further comprising, ~~[[:]]~~ in said information distribution server,

a step of collecting network state information in ~~the~~ a site to which the information distribution server belongs, and ~~the~~ state information of the information distribution server; and

an in-site information transmitting step of transmitting said collected network state information in the site, and the state information of the information distribution server to the network status server.

111. (Currently Amended) An information distribution system control method for controlling an information distribution system comprising[[:]] a plurality of dispersed/arranged information distribution servers, [[:]] and a network status server, said method comprising:

in at least a first one of said plurality of information distribution servers,
an inquiring step of inquiring of said network status server ~~about the optimum~~ which one of the plurality of information distribution servers among said information distribution servers a client should access in response to ~~an accessing to the first information distribution server by the client~~;

a response receiving step of receiving a response to said inquiry from said network status server; and

an indicating step of indicating ~~said optimum~~ an information distribution server included in the response to said client, and

in said network status server,

an inquiry receiving step of receiving the inquiry from said inquiring step of the first information distribution server;

~~a logical distance obtaining step of obtaining respective logical distances between said respective sites and said client~~;

a collecting step of collecting ~~network state information between said respective sites and said client~~, and state information in said respective sites of each of the plurality of information distribution servers;

a server determining step of determining, based on the state information, one of the optimum information distribution servers which the client accessing the first information distribution server should access ~~from said dispersed/arranged information~~

~~distribution servers based on the logical distance obtained in said logical distance obtaining step, the network state information between said respective sites and said client, and said state information in the site collected in said collecting step; and~~

~~a response transmitting step of returning the server determined in said server determining step as said optimum server to said dispersed/arranged informing the first information distribution server[s] having transmitted the inquiry of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access.~~

112. (Currently Amended) The ~~information distribution system control~~ method according to claim 111, wherein said information distribution system further comprises a route server, and said ~~control~~ method further comprises, in said route server,

a logical distance ~~calculating~~ obtaining step of obtaining [[a]] logical distances between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers to a predetermined network address from the path information between the sites, and providing said logical distances to said network status server ~~obtaining step comprises obtaining said logical distance calculated in said logical distance calculating step.~~

113. (Currently Amended) The ~~information distribution system control~~ method according to claim 111, further comprising, [[:]] in said information distribution servers,

a step of collecting network state information between ~~the~~ a site to which the information distribution server belongs and said ~~accessing~~ client; and

a network state transmitting step of transmitting said collected network state information to the network status server.

114. (Currently Amended) ~~The information distribution system control~~
method according to claim 111, further comprising, ~~[[:]]~~ in said information distribution
servers,

a step of collecting network state information of ~~the~~ a site to which the
information distribution server belongs, and the state information of the information
distribution server; and

an in-site information transmitting step of transmitting said collected
network state information in the site, and the state information of the information
distribution server to the network status server.

115. (Currently Amended) The ~~An information distribution system control~~
method according to claim 112, further comprising: ~~for controlling an information~~
~~distribution system comprising: dispersed/arranged information distribution servers; and a~~
~~network status server;~~

~~said control method comprising: in said information distribution server,~~
~~an inquiring step of inquiring of said network status server about the~~
~~optimum information distribution server among said information distribution servers in~~
~~response to an accessing client;~~

~~a response receiving step of receiving a response from said network status~~
~~server; and~~

~~an indicating step of indicating said optimum information distribution~~
~~server to said client;~~

~~in said network status server;~~

~~an inquiry receiving step of receiving the inquiry from said inquiring step;~~

~~a logical distance obtaining step of obtaining respective distances between said respective sites and said client;~~

~~a collecting step of collecting network state information between said respective sites and said client, and state information in said respective sites;~~

a site determining step of, when it is judged that the access from said client is a first access, determining ~~the~~ an optimum site from ~~said~~ respective sites provided with the ~~dispersed/arranged~~ plurality of information distribution servers based on the logical distances obtained in said logical distance obtaining step; and

a ~~first~~ second server determining step of determining ~~the~~ an optimum information distribution server from the plurality of information distribution servers in the optimum site determined in said site determining step based on a predetermined condition;

wherein in said ~~[[a]]~~ second server determining step ~~of~~, when it is judged that the access from said client is not the first access, determining the optimum information distribution server from said plurality of information distribution servers based on the logical distances obtained in said logical distance obtaining step, ~~the~~ network state information between said respective sites provided with the ~~dispersed/arranged~~ plurality of information distribution servers and said client, and ~~said~~ state information in the respective sites provided with the ~~dispersed/arranged~~ information distribution servers collected in said collecting step, ~~[[;]]~~ and

said ~~[[a]]~~ response transmitting step ~~of~~ returning the server determined in said ~~first~~ server determining step or said second server determining step as said optimum server to said ~~dispersed/arranged~~ first information distribution server~~[[s]]~~ having transmitted the inquiry.

116. to 134. (Canceled)

135. (Currently Amended) A storage medium for storing a computer readable ~~network status server control~~ determining program ~~for controlling a network status server~~, the program comprising:

~~a logical distance obtaining step of obtaining respective logical distances between respective sites provided with dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and an accessed client;~~

a receiving step of receiving an inquiry from a first information distribution server;

~~a collecting step of collecting network state information between said respective sites and said a client and a plurality of information servers; and state information in said site; and~~

~~a server determining step of determining, based on the optimum information distribution server from said dispersed/arranged information distribution servers based on the logical distance obtained in said logical distance obtaining step; the network state information, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers the client, which has accessed the first information distribution server, should access; and between said respective sites and said client, and the state information in said site collected in said collecting step~~

an informing step of informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access.

136. (Currently Amended) ~~The storage medium for storing the computer readable network status server control program according to claim 135, further comprising a wherein said logical distance obtaining step comprises of obtaining said logical distances from a route server comprising means for obtaining the logical distance to a predetermined network address from path information between the client and the plurality of information distribution servers, wherein said server determining step determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers based on the network state information and the logical distances sites.~~

137. to 142. (Canceled)

143. (Currently Amended) ~~The storage medium for storing the computer readable network status server control program according to claim 135, wherein when the network state information between said respective sites and said client is collected, said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said accessed client and said respective sites each of the plurality of information distribution servers.~~

144. (Currently Amended) ~~The storage medium for storing the computer readable network status server control program according to claim 135, wherein said server determining step determines the one of the plurality of state information in the respective sites comprises at least one of said network state information in the site provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers based on the network and said state~~

information and state information of each of the plurality of the information distribution servers.

145. (Currently Amended) The storage medium ~~for storing the computer readable network status server control program~~ according to claim 144, wherein when the network state information ~~in said respective sites~~ is collected, said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors ~~in said respective sites~~.

146. (Original) The storage medium ~~for storing the computer readable network status server control program~~ according to claim 144, wherein ~~when said state information of the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers is collected~~, said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, a number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of each of the plurality of said information distribution servers.

147. (Canceled)

148. (Currently Amended) A storage medium ~~for storing a computer readable network status server~~ determining program, the control program comprising:
a logical distance obtaining step of obtaining respective logical distances between respective sites provided with dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and an accessed client;

a receiving step of receiving an inquiry from a first information distribution server;

a collecting step of collecting network state information of each of a plurality of ~~between said respective sites and said client, and state information distribution servers in said respective sites;~~

a server determining step of ~~site determining step of,~~ based on the state information, one of the plurality of ~~when it is judged that the access from said client is a first access, determining the optimum site from said respective sites provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers which a client accessing the first information distribution server should access based on the logical distance obtained in said logical distance obtaining step; and~~

an informing step of informing the first ~~a first server determining step of determining the optimum information distribution server from the information distribution servers in said optimum site of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access in said site determining step based on a predetermined condition; and~~

~~a second server determining step of, when it is judged that the access from said client is not the first access, determining the optimum information distribution server from said dispersed/arranged information distribution servers based on the logical distance obtained in said logical distance obtaining step, the network state information between said respective sites provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and said client, and said state information in the site provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers collected in said collecting step.~~

149. (Currently Amended) The storage medium ~~for storing the computer readable network status server control program~~ according to claim 148, further comprising a wherein said logical distance obtaining step of obtaining comprises obtaining said logical distances from a route server comprising means for obtaining the logical distance to a predetermined network address from path information between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, wherein said server determining step determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers based on the state information and the logical distances sites.

150. to 155. (Canceled)

156. (Currently Amended) The storage medium ~~for storing the computer readable network status server control program~~ according to claim 148, wherein said server determining step determines, based on site determining step comprises determining the site in which the respective logical distances between said respective sites provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and said accessed the client and a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of information distribution servers, one of the plurality of sites, and determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers are minimum as said optimum site.

157. to 159. (Canceled)

160. (Currently Amended) The storage medium ~~for storing the computer readable network status server control program~~ according to claim 148, wherein said first

server determining step determines one of a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of information distribution servers, and determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers in the determined one of the plurality of sites step comprises determining the optimum information distribution server based on the state information in said optimum site.

161. (Currently Amended) The storage medium ~~for storing the computer readable network status server control program~~ according to claim 148, wherein ~~when the network state information between said respective sites provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers and said accessed client is collected,~~ said collecting step comprises collecting at least one information of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said ~~accessed~~ client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers ~~said respective sites.~~

162. (Currently Amended) The storage medium ~~for storing the computer readable network status server control program~~ according to claim 148, wherein said state information ~~in the site~~ further comprises ~~at least one of said~~ network state information in ~~the site and said state information of a plurality of sites provided with~~ the information distribution servers ~~in the site.~~

163. (Currently Amended) The storage medium ~~for storing the computer readable network status server control program~~ according to claim ~~[[162]]~~ 148, wherein ~~when the network state information in said site provided with the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers is collected,~~ said collecting step further comprises

collecting at least one information of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors ~~in said site~~.

164. (Currently Amended) The storage medium ~~for storing the computer readable network status server control program~~ according to claim ~~[[162]]~~ 148, wherein ~~when said state information of the dispersed/arranged information distribution servers is collected~~, said collecting step comprises collecting at least one information of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, a number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of each of the plurality of said information distribution servers.

165. to 177. (Canceled)

178. (New) The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.

179. (New) The apparatus according to claim 30, wherein each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.

180. (New) The method according to claim 76, wherein each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.

181. (New) The method according to claim 89, wherein each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.

182. (New) The storage medium according to claim 135, wherein the each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.

183. (New) The storage medium according to claim 148, wherein each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.